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TAGS: PREL PINS JO I2

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN AND IRAQI INTERIOR MINISTERS DISCUSS SECURITY

REF: 05 AMMAN 7273

Classified By: CHARGE D, AFFAIRES DANIEL RUBINSTEIN FOR REASONS 1.4 (b a nd d)

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: Jordanian Interior Minister Eid al-Fayez and his Iraqi counterpart Jawad al-Bolani (along with Iraqi Minister of State for National Security Sherwan al-Wa'li) met in Amman on December 13 to discuss the formation of joint committees aimed at countering terrorism, border control, and exchanging convicts. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Mukhaimer Abu Jamous, Secretary General of Jordan's Interior Ministry, told poloff December 17 that the discussions in Amman between the Jordanian and Iraqi Ministers of Interior were "fruitful and productive." The Iraqis' one-day visit focused on establishing three committees: the first to create a reliable system for sharing information on terrorist groups, the second to focus on improving the operations of the Karama-Trebil crossing and sharing immigration information, and the third to formalize procedures for the repatriation of criminals. Abu Jamous said that Jordanian Minister of Interior al-Fayez is now reviewing the proposed agreements, and will provide comment back to the Iraqi government soon - possibly during a proposed trip to Baghdad for discussions on a new, joint counterterrorism strategy.

¶3. (C) Abu Jamous said that the Iraqi delegation was aware of weaknesses in Iraqi administration of the border, and that the Iraqis promised to strengthen their presence there. According to Abu Jamous, the Iraqi delegation also said an "experience exchange" would be useful as customs and immigration personnel from both countries could benefit from each other's experience. Abu Jamous said that both sides agreed that border forces needed to communicate more regularly, as well as to establish a joint database for customs and immigration officials at common ports of entry.

¶4. (C) Abu Jamous complained about a lack of continuity in Iraqi government officials. He told poloff that one of Jordan's biggest problems with the Iraqi government is that GoJ officials must deal with a new Iraqi each time they meet their counterparts - and that the new Iraqis whom they are meeting with don't have knowledge of past agreements or meetings. "It's like starting from scratch every time," he said.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: The visit of the Iraqi Interior and National Security Ministers to Amman is another step in the "good neighbor process" initiated in 2005 by the visits to Baghdad of former Jordanian Prime Minister Badran and current Prime Minister Bakhit, and more recently the visit of Iraqi PM Maliki to Jordan during which he saw King Abdullah and several Jordanian ministers before his meeting with the President. Although additional bilateral interaction is required across the spectrum of Jordanian-Iraqi relations,

the sharing of counterterrorism-related information and enhancing of cooperation along their common border clearly enjoy priority. In spite of the lack of continuity described by Abu Jamous, the visit of al-Bolani -- a significant improvement over Bayan Jabr Solagh in the eyes of many Jordanian government officials -- is a good indicator of the improving relationship between the GoJ and the government of Iraqi PM Maliki. END COMMENT.

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